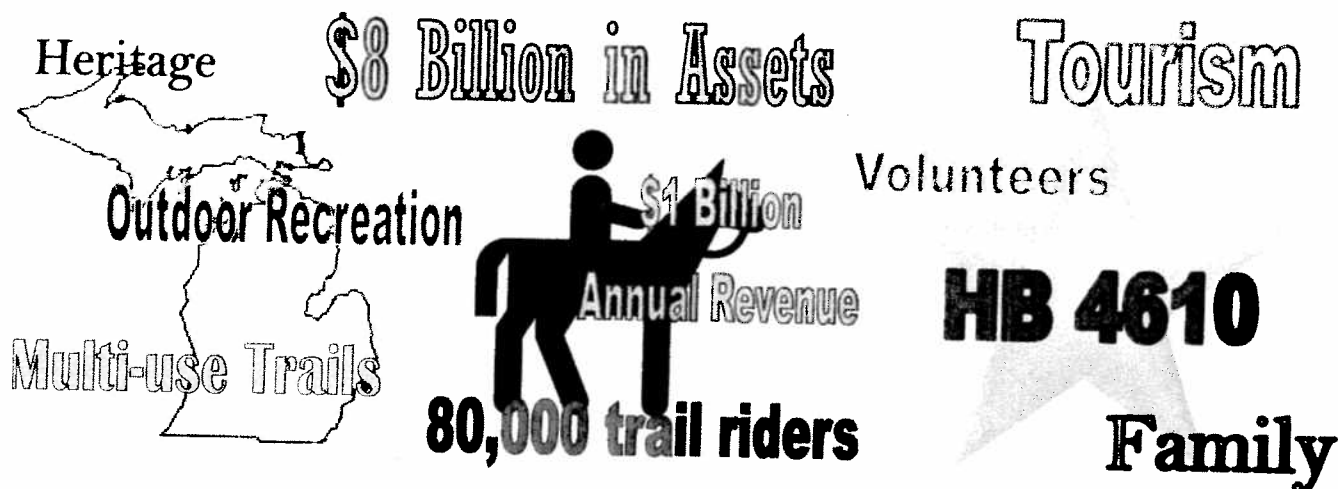


## HB 4610 Petition Comments

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# Right to Ride

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<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/Enact-HB4610-Michigan-Right-to-Ride-legislation>

I created an online petition on March 27, 2009. Persons signing this online petition were asked to leave information about any trails or areas that had been closed to horseback riding. In addition, more than 5,000 signatures have been collected on paper petitions which are also being submitted.

What you will find in these pages are the comments from more than 1000 people and their plea for the Government to return the land to the users.

The online petition will remain open until Michigan Equestrians have Right-to-Ride legislation, and areas that have been wrongfully closed, are reopened to horses and other users.

Gabrielle Hume  
3395 LeValley Road  
Columbiaville, MI 48421

April 28, 2009 10 am: Online + Paper

8380

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# 1173: Michigan: I support the Right to Ride on public lands throughout Michigan. Equestrians are major contributors to Michigan's economy and also are a low impact user. There are numerous studies compiled by Natural Resource departments throughout the United States that clearly show horseback riding is low impact, a low vector for transmission of weeds, and a very low vector for wildlife disturbance. There are many organizations within the equine community in Michigan that have offered to aid in trail maintenance and design as well as support trails through volunteer labor.

- The argument that the Pittman-Roberts act does not allow horseback riding if those federal funds are used on public land is weak.
- The argument that if the State Game fund was used to purchase the land means that horseback riding is in violation is weak and inaccurate because the source of funds for the State Game fund is not solely hunting licenses and fees.

Isn't the mission of the MDNR one of managing our natural resources for all consumers using scientific data? Why does it appear that the MDNR is not looking at the users of today but continually looking backward and trying to support the users of yesterday? The statistics developed by the MDNR clearly show that hunting and fishing users have been declining for more than 10 years. Would it not be logical to look at the consumer market you have instead of trying to subsidize the consumer market that is declining through increased universal access fees? When prices increase - demand decreases. This is a simple economic premise that appears to elude the MDNR when it comes to hunting and fishing license fees.

Lastly, many states receive a significant amount of tourism revenue from horseback riding participants. Michigan could participate in this revenue enhancement.

#4: No state land should be off limits to a limited and specific group of people who want to enjoy the natural beauty of the state while doing no damage to the environment. What does the DEQ and DNR have against Northern Michigan ... first the Mullett Lake Snowmobile trail and now the horse trails in the Pigeon River area. It is ridiculous.

#7: This bill is about so much more than just trail riders rights, it's about the public's right to have access to use and enjoy OUR public lands! Everyone should care about our freedoms being taken from us, our children and our grandchildren. All freedom lovers should support this legislation even if you're not a rider. It might be your group they come after next. It the right thing to do and it's our responsibility to keep our government in check. It's "our" land, not the DNR's and not the bureaucrats land. It's time to take a stand friends and say enough is enough!

#8: All public lands in the State of Michigan should be open to compatable uses of that land unless there is a compelling reason not to do so supported by documented scientific evidence.

#14: Ditto: This bill is about so much more than just trail riders rights, it's about the public's right to have access to use and enjoy OUR public lands! Everyone should care about our freedoms being taken from us, our children and our grandchildren. All freedom lovers should support this legislation even if you're not a rider. It might be your group they come after next. It the right thing to do and it's our responsibility to keep our government in check. It's "our" land, not the DNR's and not the bureaucrats land. It's time to take a stand friends and say enough is enough!

#25: The area just outside of Norvell is open to hunters but closed to horses. It is all around the area by Prospect Hill Rd, Lamon Rd., Fishville Rd. Eusades Rd. etc. The hunters don't mind us riding during non hunting times of the year which keeps their trails more open for them. Yet the area is posted NO HORSES, and the dnr will give out tickets to anyone caught riding there. I don't understand why, if we all pay taxes on state land, it isn't open to everyone. After all, it is our state. Thank-you Carolyn

#27: Everyone should be able to enjoy our states lands in Michigan

#30: I'm not sure but rumor has it the jordan is next!! not sure though I'm afraid to ask the DNR!!!

#32:Area's of the Allegan State Game area are posted No Horses Allowed by the DNR.

#38: I can't believe that we as horse owners have to fight to keep land open to us for trail riding, it just seems crazy to me.

#40: The Rail Trail should be able to be used for horseback riding.

#42: cannot understand why the DNR is so opposed to horseback riding on public land and closing so many places to riding.

#43: Please, keep the Rail-Trail open for riding, as we have came to MI for a lot off years, just to ride. Thanks, Mary

#52: It is becoming more difficult over time to be able to safely ride on roads as they are paved, traffic increases, the public's undstanding of how to properly pass a horse on the road decreases, and with the advent of hybrid vehicles that horses cannot hear (causing the horse to spook when the vehicle is suddenly upon them). Please support the use of public trails and land for horse back riders.

#53: Please, We need to have the and all trails open to pack and saddle animals open for all . There is no harm to the wild or the domestic . No more weeds scattered then bird droppings. Help us involve our children in an outside sport... And help me enjoy the sport of my entire life.

#56: I am in michigan so I can ride horses. if you take it away I will move somewhere else where they are horse friendly. I am a professional and spend money in michigan. With Michigans economy I would think you would be thinking of ways to encourage the use of its resources not decrease its revenues. Horses have been here a long time they are not hurting Michigan.

#60: I COME FROM A FAMILY OF HORSEMEN, I AM 50 AND RIDE WITH MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY. I CANNOT EXPRESS THE VALUE OF THE TRAILS TO SO MANY OF US. WE DESERVE TO BE ABLE TO RIDE ON THE PUBLIC LANDS AS THEY BELONG TO US TOO.

#64: Far as I'm concern the DNR are is all wet. They complain about the weeds the horse pass through there droppings. What about the wild life? Deer,Moose,ELK? Its OK for the ATV's ,dirt bikes, to rip the land scape and they complain about the horse's Also we disturbing the Elk?? I've been 12 feet away from a Bull Elk all He did is kept on eating. Let the ATV's and Dirt Bikes say that. It was the back of a horse to settle this country. How many wars the horse's did the horse died for us? plow our fields? Equine people put money in this state ,buying gas,food,camping equipment,ect. We pay for this land with our taxes and now we can't use it. There is some thing wrong here.

#65: It's sad that we need to legislate our "right" to ride "our" land.

#66: All areas in Ottawa County that are called "OPEN AIR" areas..Been riding on these properties for 25 years..and now, all of a sudden..No Horses allowed...Yet someone went through and clear cut all the pines, etc.(the DNR)? It is devastating to see what they did to the beautiful woods..And what a mess.!!!A rider and their horse are out to enjoy the countryside..Not to destroy it..

#67: The ability to ride my horse on public lands in Michigan is a privilege that I wish would not be taken away. Of all the many acres of public land, a horse's path takes up so little space. I also enjoy hiking and mountain biking on public land and hope those privileges will remain intact as well. Please protect the tax payers' right to use the land they pay to help protect. I would even be willing to pay for a horseback riding trail permit, if it comes to that, similar to the amount charged to use a state park campground for a season.

#69: I am an avid horseback rider and would like to let the powers that be know that I am for any bill that gives riders the right to ride. Horseback riding is a quiet sport that lets the people enjoy the land without causing any harm to it. For me riding is a passion and having land available to ride is so important with urban sprawl happening.

#72: Equestrians that use state and federal lands in the state of Michigan are a lucrative boost to the state's economy. Please listen to our voices as we are many. Do not overlook this valuable resource of funds.

#88: I Want The Horse Camps Left Open For All To Use Not Just To Certain Groups

#90: Horses contribute \$8 billion state-wide, with more than 155,000 horses and 80,000 Trail Riders in Michigan. Seems to me, Madame Governor, you may need us to keep this economy supported! Please leave us access to all public lands for future generations.

#91: we need to have places to ride in michigan or more people will be riding out of state and what does that do for the economy? leave our trails alone unless you want to forbid any hikers and hunters and bicycles from state land too.

#92: I would really like to see some of our leaders of our state go for a ride in the woods and enjoy nature at its quietest. Its just as great as a walk but your able to explore alot more(go further) and go places you would have a hard time walking in. I can't tell you enough how wonderful it is to ride in our state!! I love traveling and meeting others in our small towns while purchasing gasoline or groceries. I've had children as well as adults run to my horse trailer to pet my horses while at these places. Please keep our trails/camps open, Michigan is one of the best places to ride in this country.

#93: There is land east of Waterloo, Grass Lake that is only open to the Hunt Club of the area. Lets all use it. Along with land south of Grass Lake off Fishville rd. also.

#98: OUR COUNTRY was founded with the help of horses. Trail riding is a way to keep that fact alive! Please keep the public lands open for equestrian use.

#99: I have spent weeks at a time camping out with my horses in the Pigeon River area, as well as riding across the state. I have had the pleasure of meeting some wonderful people along the way, many from out of state who are also bringing revenue into the small towns in the surrounding areas of the camps. During my rides I have been blessed with the opportunity to be within 20-30 feet of bull elk, yet they continue to graze--and I can return the next day to see them in the same place. Horse people in general are a great group of people

with total respect for nature's beauty. We always try to "leave only hoofprints". I've known many horse people to get off their horses and clean up what others have left behind. The hunters complain about us, but on the other hand some of the things they leave behind are deplorable....everything from their torn tarps and toilet facilities to bags of garbage. There are "bad apples" in all disciplines, but as a whole when horse people spend the kind of money they do to feed and maintain their animals, (not to mention the kind of work that goes into them throughout the year), the cost of tack, and of their complete camping rigs, the fuel to get there--there has to be no other intention behind all that but to enjoy the great outdoors and the beauty of nature this state has to offer. There seems to be more and more people hit on the road on horseback from the lack of respect and patience on the part of drivers, and we need to preserve safe places to ride. I feel riders in the woods are also extra sets of eyes for the purpose of security and safety to lessen the chances of poaching and other illegal and illicit activities performed by the general public that I have unfortunately witnessed. The people that are making these decisions to "off" us horse people need to slow down and stop and smell the roses...life is so precious, and so short--they need to put away their cell phones, their pda's and take a trip back in time to enjoy the simple things in life....the peacefulness, splendor, beauty and wildlife that can only be witnessed from the back of a horse. Horse people still know what family values are....spending time together and teaching their children respect for the outdoors.

#104: I am urging you to support the Right to Ride Legislation. As a tax payer I am very unhappy about trail closures. In Michigan horses are a huge source of money for the state - in the form of gas dollars spent and visitors who travel here to ride our wonderful trails. This is an existing resource and an existing source of business income that we can maintain and not lose unlike the auto industry. Please work to make this happen.

#106: Please help us protect our rights and heritage as equestrians. We care about our State and we appreciate any support of our cause.

#111: One would think that with the Billions Equine owners spend in Michigan the state would promote its Great out doors to the Equine World as Many others State's have done. We Tax payers also have a vision like P.S. Lovejoy had of the so Called "BIG WILD" Its called THE RIGHT TO RIDE on STATE OWNED LAND!!! the highest paying job in todays Michigan Economy is a one way U-Haul headed south. tourism in Michigan like jobs in Michigan are and will continue to head south and the people who depend on tourism are starving! WAKE UP LANSING!!!!

#113: please consider this bill... the horses do not damage the environment, or the trails, and are very quiet. Any families that I come across while riding, enjoy visiting and petting my horses. I do the shore to shore rides, and would love to have many more places to enjoy my horses and michigan.

#114: Lapeer State Game Area, Murphy Lake State Game Area, The Lapeer area has been a recent closure, and the Genesee Parks Elba Equestrian Center also experienced a threat of closure. Trailriding is one of the fastest growing equine sports. The enactment of this bill will not only impact state residents, but will also increase tourism. I have rode many trail miles and met many people on the trails including hunters, fishermen, bikers, hikers, ATV's, photographers, and even a writer for a news paper. All were positive experiences, with no conflict. PLEASE!! consider this bill!

#119: I feel our state and its occupants do have the right to enjoy Michigan's beautiful land. These trails were developed for this purpose, and I see no reason why our citizens can not enjoy them. This is absurd!

#123: My friends and I trail ride several hours a week throughout the year. Often times I host trail rides leaving from my stable where other horse owners haul in to and ride with me. We ride in Genesee County Parks, both

the rustic areas and the developed sections. It would be a great loss to never be able to ride our horses there again, so I have much compassion for the area targeted by the proposed bill Representative Tim Moore has submitted. As I have rode the same trail areas for 30 years, I have noticed the damage caused to the land by people using quads, motorcycles, and snowmobiles. As they speed down the twisting paths, they create large embankments where their machines dig in on the turns. They leave their trash in areas where they stop to rest or party, and they burn fires illegally there as well. People hike in to the river and fish. They leave all their fishing trash, styrofoam coolers, pop/beer cans, snack wrappers, and plastic worm containers. Whether they intentionally pollute the river with their trash or if it blows there eventually, it should not be assumed horseback riders are responsible. Horses never destroy nature; in fact, they are a serene part of it. Most horseback riders carry saddlebags and we take our trash back with us. Please do not allow HB4610 to end a form of recreation that has existed since the beginning of our country.

#124: One of Director Humphries favorite talking points states that there are 900 miles of Rails-to-Trails for equestrians to enjoy yet in reality only about 178 miles are open to horses. Also states that there is over 3.75 MILLION acres open to horses-yet when asked to please show us those areas-no one in her department seems to know exactly where they are. For your information-Did you all know that \$83,000 was spent from gas and oil revenues to completely renovate Pickerel Lake Campground (people camp) in the Pigeon River State Forest to accommodate larger rigs adding more campsites-making them larger and more level-new wells-bathroom facilities, fire rings?...stating that this campground brings so much money to the PRC yet completely ignoring the revenue brought to the area by the equestrians...very amazing!

#125: We all need to be vigilant about the public lands that are available to us to ride in. We have excellent trails here in MI. I do not want to lose them! Val

#128: This is not going to happen without everyone's support. You do not have to be an equine owner to sign this petition. Other group users have been targets in the past. Who will be next? Send this to everyone on your list, please.

#131: I have been riding on Genesee Country land, and in Richfield Park (Davison, Mi) for as long as I have been riding horses. I am a Biology student at the University of Michigan in Flint, and I can tell you, from a biological and ecological perspective the horses do absolutely NO damage to the areas that we ride in. If the purpose of the bill is to preserve environments it should focus more on limiting the use of ORVs and keeping pollution left by hunters, fishermen and ORV operators controlled!

#132: Bald Mountain Recreation Area in Oakland County and Lapeer State Recreation Areas..northeast of Lapeer and north of Otter Lake

#138: Yes Point Mouille state game area. I was told after 20yrs that horses were no longer allowed. The dike holds semi traffic and borders a landfill. So how are horses harming this? There are no trails anywhere in Monroe co. I must trailer to wayne co. and ride the horse trail in the game preserve there[ Cross winds marsh.] Please help me get my riding area back.

#142: Horses have been in this state and ridden overland from the time the Indian Tribes were fighting each other. The HORSE was a large part of building this state from hauling supplies to patrolling by the cavalry. The HORSE is just as much a part of this state as well as all the animals that roam it. We are not asking you the state for BIKE trails which cut a path far and wide and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to construct, We! the modern people of the HORSE are just asking for a little dirt. My horse Kaiser will not impact your states environment or scare the wildlife away. I'm a decorated United States Veteran and I as many others have

earned the RIGHT!! TO RIDE our horses on the land of this great State of Michigan without the tyrannical rule of SOME, public officials set on destroying a GREAT!sport.

#145: Nordhouse Dunes, Lake Michigan We used to ride there between 1986 thru 1996 then got cut off! What a beautiful area to ride in!!

#148: I feel it's vitally important to preserve and increase land available for the use of hiking and horseback riding.

#151: Let me see ... oh land of the free... What could that mean?

#156: My spouse and I have been riding in the Pigeon River for the last 20 years. All of our vacations are spent horseback riding. Please allow us to continue to enjoy Michigan's beautiful State land areas on horseback!

#157: Please support this bill and allow people who own horses to use state land for trail riding. As more and more subdivisions are built (in better times) we lose the back roads and places to ride. And because of increased traffic, the back roads are unsafe for both our animals and us. By keeping state land available to trail riders, we help support the parks with yearly dues and camping fees. Please vote for this bill and give us a place to exercise our animals in safety and enjoyment. Thank you.

#158: Horses have always been allowed on state lands and they are an important part of our history. Please allow horses with no restrictions on state land. Of course, there should be reasonable use by location.

#159: Rose Lake Research Area in Bath used to be open to all horseback riding. It is not "officially" closed to horses...but you know that your horse is definitely not welcome anymore. Horse trails are actively blocked with downed trees.

#161: I would like to ride wherever my horse will take me. All trails should be open to everyone not just a few. I like the trails in Addison Oaks and we clean them every year. So pass this bill without any thing attached to it.

#168: Pigeon River

#169: The Gladwin Field Trial Area in Gladwin County, Michigan(federal land) has been closed to most riding except for roads. Horse trailer parking has been restricted to areas that are not easily accessible by larger rigs.

#176: Please realize that a decent amount of revenue is brought to our area by those trailering in from other localities to enjoy the beautiful trails that we have, three seasons of four. Even if they travel within state, the expense of doing so cycles funds through our economy; every bit helps the dire scenario we face. In fact, if it weren't for horses I wouldn't be in Michigan, nor starting my business and taking the hard road to stay here instead of returning to my former career in California.

#179: I am not a equestrian, but support them 100%. All individuals that use state land for recreation could find their favorite sport limited just like what is happening to the equestrians. All forms of recreation that use state land must work together in order to maintain access to state land and federal lands. This is more than just a equestrian problem, it is an ACCESS problem. Pass the word!!

#189: Thompson's Harbor State Park. This was state land that was open to horseback riding and is now closed after it became a state park. It is undeveloped.



#193: I am a therapeutic riding instructor for NARHA. Lands like Pigeon River State Forest, have always been a goal for my students to achieve. The availability of such a vast riding wilderness in the lower peninsula is very valuable to our group. When you are working with troubled teens, the very environment that these riding/camping areas create are therapeutic in their very own. Imagine them actually earning a chance to take a horse camping and maybe being able to see elk, see the northern lights, hear coyote at night, no cell phones, no computers, and most of all no pressures! Please don't take this great resource and teaching tool from us. I am very happy to talk with you further on what great results we have with teens and special needs individuals when you use horses and nature. Sheryl L. Mankel 616-891-0525

#196: Yes, Lapeer county, Vernor State land, and some whee closed up north last yr.that link the across the state equine trail system. We need more area's to ride that will only help the state in safety and resource funds.

#210: we complain about the loss of revenue for our state but then we shut down camps and such which bring in dollars for our state.Now maybe there aren't as many riders as hunters or other outdoor recreation enthusiast but we should all be able to use/ share the lands. If we keep shutting things down it means less money coming in to our state and also maybe more money going to others as some of us will look for other places that offer open trails and camping for the equine enthusiast.

#212: This Involves All Of Us Horse Lovers. Please sign.

#214: Originally from MI and still own a cabin/land there. Keeping these trails open is a must for everyone, especially the state!

#226: I am the past President of the first MI affiliate of Back Country Horsemen of America. This is an organization which is focused, fair and 1000% supportive of not only equine use for PUBLIC lands but all users. They teach the significant "Leave No Trace" guidelines (which all users should be required to at least read) and will help anyone and everyone who wants to utilize the parks, preserves and wilderness of this beautiful country. Equine users are an untapped economic pool who will not only provide benefits to the areas surrounding the public grounds, but will leave the area better off than it was before. Please follow the intelligent states who have set the example to date and do not try and diminish public lands to a select few with lobbyists who feel they are the only ones with the "right to ride".

#224: I ride, I am gentle on the land. Most horseman respect the trails, please let us enjoy them!

#254: There is a place near Buckley on the Manistee river that has been rode by many family and friends for years even since I was small that is coming close to being closed to horses. The High Rollaway is closed to horses because there are so many people going there to the look-out built by the DNR. There are hiking trails put in also that they want to close to horses, some of which were made by horses.

#260: It is sad that any group would not be allowed to enjoy the trails and beauty of Michigan.

#270: Horsemen & women are very responsible and take care of the environment. Trail riding doesn't destroy the area like snowmobiles or ATV. It is a gentle way to enjoy our state'e great outdoors.

#276: Horse are good for the soul, a quiet ride is a great way to reduce stress.

#278: I live north of Lowell, Michigan and there are numerous areas of state land that we can not ride our horses on and would like to.

#282: I live in Portland, there are tons of state land in my area and most are closed to horses. With money being tight for most people, it would be nice to ride locally and not spend \$100+ in gas to ride at specify horse only areas.

#296: We snowmobilers support the rights of horse riders to have access to the trails on state land.

#298: I am a horse owner and there is nothing more relaxing that a nice ride out on the trails.

#312: My husband and I own four horses. Since I enjoy trailriding I moved to Lapeer to be near three trails. I had to buy a trailer to get to these trails and then I got to know other people in the area that ride. Since these other people like to go camping with their horses I had to buy a bigger trailer and a bigger truck. All of these items are taxed and insured in Michigan. I don't travel outside of the state to ride, but I would be forced to if Michigan keeps on losing land to ride on. I know that our state has bigger issues, but once this land is lost it is never coming back.

#315: Pigeon River Forest .... Which Just happens to be my back yard. I have lived there for 27 years. My property backs on the State Forest. No one has the right to take that freedom away. I should have the right to continue to ride in my own back yard....

#317: Please don't take away our land, we are tax payers too!

#318: It is important to keep all trails open for equestrian use and to educate our elected representatives about the economic impact of this hobby/business. May each of you take a minute to sign this petition and to then write to or call your representatives regarding your support of HB 4610. I joined Back Country Horsemen for this specific cause and you may want to do so also.

#320: Horsemen add millions of dollars a year to the Michigan economy. If the state continues to deplete riding trails, the interest in being a horseman will diminish taking away yet another industry from our state.

#321: large parts of Waterloo Recreation Area area open to hikers, but closed to horses. This seemed to be an arbitrary decision several years ago for no apparent good reason. We had been riding those trails for years with no problems.

#326: The State needs to realize the Dollars that Horse people spend and will continue to spend in Michigan if trails are available. Gas, trucks, trailers, feed and food, park admission, Camping, health care for animals - Property to keep our horses, fencing, barns. The list could go on and on - Horse owners are very environmental aware and respectful of nature. That is why we ride.

#330: I support the bill to preserve and promote horseback riding and the use of pack animals on Michigan's public lands.

#332: As an avid trail rider, horseback riding instructor and Therapeutic Riding Instructor with NARHA, I fully support keeping public land open to riding. Riding on roads is increasingly dangerous. Riding a horse may be the only option for a person with disabilities to enjoy trails. Thank you for the opportunity to express my view.

#333: Please reopen state land for use by horseback riders. I support the bill to perserve and promote horseback riding on state lands.

#334: There are sections of State Land by Silver Creek in Hamilton, MI that were available to horses a few years ago that are now closed to horses.

#337: We anxiously await the advent of spring so we can get out on the established trails. We have purchased a larger trailer so we can camp, ride and socialize with other horse owners. 100 years ago a horse could travel anywhere, now gas guzzling ATVs and snowmobiles have more rights than horse and rider.

#338: Isn't state owned land in reality owned by the citizens of the state of michigan?? Please allow us to use this land for trail riding.

#339: Horses have been on this land for hundreds of years. They pose no harm to any ground they walk on. Most horse owners that choose to use this land are good people and would not harm your land either, it is a privledge to use, why would we harm it? To deny the use of land for horses to walk on is stupid.

#340: Please allow the horsemen access to the trails that we have been able to use in the past! Michigan needs the tourist dollars that are associated with this activity. The expenses associated with horse ownership are also a boost to Michigan's economy. Please continue to allow us to continue enjoying the beauty of this great state!

#341: Horsemen and women are a responsible, respectful, earth friendly group of people in every way. We are caretakers of the environment as well as our animals. We are very concerned about losing the right to use safe public land to ride on. Closing trails to horses and conservative horse riders/owners who usually are the ones who work to keep those same trails clean and in good condition is just totally wrong. Saying they have an adverse reaction to wildlife is also wrong. Deer and elk come to 'visit' our horses all the time. Obviously they are not impacted by our animals.

#350: Trail riding is not only a valuable economic resource for northern Michigan but a very important part of our heritage. Thank you for your support is preserving this valuable resource and right.

#351: It's appalling that we have allowed the DNR, specifically it's leadership, to lie to us and take away land useage like Pigeon, and still keep their positions. NEVER FORGET the 10 Million Dollar DNR Fiasco!

#356: We all need this RIGHT TO RIDE bill! It's time for the State of Michigan to wake up and STOP running commerce OUT of Michigan! Are you trying to run an eight billion dollar industry out of Michigan Governor Granholm?

#358: DNR says our horses create erosion... what about elk, deer, etc. that use the same trails? DNR claim horses scare the elk, how can that be true when we have riden by a herd and they never moved, and when the elk graze next to where we camp? Our group could really see the elk shaking in their hooves. :)

#359: Life Member of the Michigan Sheriff's Mounted Association. And I believe that we need are RIGHT TO RIDE PUBLIC LAND. The Horse Industry in Michigan is slowly fading away and with Our Heritage. The Horse was here before we were and it was then as it is now a very good form of Relaxation, Recreation and Transportation.

#360: I spend a lot of money in this state on horse related things. I spend money to camp with my horses and to ride at state parks.

#362: Please, reopen the state land at Siver Creek in Allegan County Mi.. Also, I support the right to ride on state ground where ever it is as long as it is not necessary to travel over privete property to get to it.

#363: Please reopen these trails for the horses and their owners!

#367: Why not use your time more effediently and leave ordinary citazens alone to ride their horses. The riders are much more apt to respect wild land and wild life than those tearing it up with their automobiles and expensive toys. Wil you not take everything away from regular people who just want to enjoy the out doors.....

#369: I have ridden at Silver Creek Park since I was a little girl. The equestrian area was the size of day parking back then. Over the years it has grown to be a crown jewel in Michigan. I strongly support the Right To Ride.

#376: We opperate a state licensed equine facility in the vacinity of the Pigeon River State Forest. The closing of this land to equine use can have an adverse affect both on tourism in northern Mich and my business as well.

#379: Sure would be nice to ride on DNR property accross from Addison Oaks County Park. Thank you.

#385: Please help us to retain our horseback riding trails and to get back the trails and camps that have been taken away from us. My husband and I spend thousands of dollars every year to support our love of horses and to be able to use them to enjoy our beautiful state. Every person who owns a horse spends a lot of money on feed, tack, vet bills, farrier bills, fencing, barns, camping equipment, trucks trailers and fuel to get to these trails and camps. The money that equestrians spend every year brings in billions to Michigans economy. Our hobby supports many other service providers, vetrerinarians and companies. Why would the state want to discourage us from our hobby when it helps the economy and does absolutely no harm to our land?

#387: Please allow trail riding on state land. As a tax payer, I help maintain this land. I should be allowed to use it. I find it sad that not only is Michigan going to lose tourist money - But Michigan riders will take their money out of state to spend where they can ride.

#392: The ability to use state land for recreation is every Michigan citizens right. However, recently the trend has been to close land to horseback riding due to the droppings left by horses. I don't understand, some people actually pay for manure to fertilize. I don't mind sharing state land with other outdoor recreation enthusiasts, but do mind being restricted from state land because my vehicle of choice is a horse. Thank you for your time and efforts to keep state lands open to horseback riding.

#396: I am a semi-retired veterinarian and spend many hours riding each week. It is so disappointing to find public areas that won't allow horses. Please open the land to the enjoyment of all non-motorized recreational use. Thank you.

#403: Dear state representitives: THE HORSE COMMUNIY CONTRIBUTES MORE MONEY THAN ANY OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVEITY IN THE STATE. THE HORSES ARE JUST A PART OF NATURE. WHY THEY THINK HORSES ARE SCAREING THE FISH, WHAT ABOUT THE DEER, ELK AND THE OTHER WILD LIFE.

#408: The closing of trails in Michigan to horse traffic is unacceptable. Please, don't allow any closures and reopen the trails in the Pigeon River Forest, and any other trails that have been closed.

#412: Many Michigan trails are open to people with dogs. Horses have a smaller impact on our natural environment than dogs do. Please do not limit their access.

#415: I am supportive of HB 4610. The historical reliance by humans of the horse is being thwarted by the DNR. Perhaps a hidden agenda is the reason, but no matter what our horses should be able to use the land they have used for years before the DNR even existed. The people who ride them too should be allowed to do so as

historically the Pigeon and other innumerable areas are being stripped from use by the one group who has been here longer than any - the horseman and woman. I support HB 4610

#416: We are forgetting the financial impact the horse owners have on the economy in Michigan. With the loss of farm land and more developments in the rural areas it is harder and harder to find areas open to equestrians. With every new person in a recreational area there are financial benefits to the area for example gas and food.

#418: Save the trails! It's not fair to people who spend money on horses or spend money to live in the country or cross through it. We have enough roads.

#422: Please, support right to ride.

#424: Tell me how it's fair for motorbikes, dune buggies, snow mobiles, bicycles, etc., can use state-owned property but horses can't? That makes no sense. The damage left by horses is certainly less than motorized vehicles.

#426: My husband and I are members of the MI Trail Riders. We have horses so we can ride the beautiful trails here. If they are taken away we might as well sell our horses, truck, and trailer. There will be no need to buy MI hay, MI feed, new saddles, tack, or other horse equipment. No need for hiring MI vet or MI farrier. Then as soon as we retire we will move to a more horse trail friendly state. Many of our friends said they would do the same. If this happens a lot of money that could have stayed in MI will go to another state where we will buy back horses, hay, tack, equipment, trucks, and trailers. And hire that state's vets and farriers, etc. That move will be bad for the MI economy. Therefore we implore to support HB 4610

#436: There are public lands which have already been designated as "off-limits" to horses. Some of these designations are not legal and did not follow due process of the law. This will continue unless the trend is actively stopped. It is time for horse owners to take a stand, before it is too late.

#438: Pigeon Forest and Goose Creek are areas that to my knowledge are now closed to horses. In my mind taking these rights away from horse recreation is a crime! Especially when we are trying these days to keep fuel consumption down, lower green house gasses and take advantage of any other industries that Michigan can encourage, you close the door to horse people and make them feel unwelcome, you close the door on a big one! We can't afford to turn that away, we should be enjoying and promoting it just as we do our snow season recreations!

#440: Please keep the woods open to the public and let them decide how they want to enjoy the outdoors.

#453: Horses are among mankind's earliest domesticated animals. Please respect riding's tradition and encourage this healthy activity by keeping public land accessible.

#457: The land of our state should be governed by the people of our state! We should be allowed to access state land so long as we do not damage it.

#459: Please keep our trails open so we can share them with our grandchildren. Equine activities serve to keep our youth interested in the great outdoors. Respect for the environment and nature cannot be learned in front of a television playing with electronic games. Help me keep trails open to my grandchildren so they will be better stewards of the land and our natural renewable resources. Thanks for your hard work championing our cause!

#463: If they close 1 trail it will just be the beginning of the end. The people wanting to close the trails need to stay on the sidewalks in the cities.

#468: It would be a shame if a State, so in trouble financially, would deny it's citizens the right to enjoy the use of our State land. By doing so the State of Michigan's governing body denies those local businesses who might profit in the stimulated sales even further. How about we promote our beautiful state and encourage people to stimulate the economy instead of taking away more of the enjoyments that help keep us all sane in these distressing times!

#471: Rouge river state game area is closed to riding and we would love to be able to ride there . the game area is near our home.

#476: Please keep the trails open that we can enjoy enjoy our beautiful state on horseback, the best way to travel!

#477: Beards Hills area in St Clair county Michigan is closed to horses.

#478: Please don't close any area, if they start with one it will keep going to another and another. Our horses need more area's to ride.

#479: Sleeping Bear National Park only has one horse accessable area.

#500: Please encourage the responsible use of our rich Michigan outdoor resources and allow trails to be used for recreational riding. Such use could encourage tourism and the influx of badly needed dollars in to the state. Additionally, such recreational use encourages healthy activity in children, is a learning experience and teaches children to love the beauty of their state and become better stewards of the land.

#505: I live in Allendale, MI. In between my land and the Grand River is all state land that I AM NOT allowed to ride on. Acres and acres bought with my tax money that I am not allowed to ride on. Why do they always group us in with quads--we are not motorized vehicles!!!

#508: With Michigan's 4-H program changing, the opportunity for our children to have land available for them to ride is such a plus. I've taken 4-H clubs, for years, to our state equestrian areas. My family of children, grandchildren, neices, nephews, great neices & nephews along with friends go at least 2 times a year to the same. What a loss to our younger generation is this changes.k

#510: Legislators allow hunters access just about anywhere as they have the money to "lobby" for whateverer they desire. We just want to enjoy the land and we don't kill for pleasure like the hunters...I am a skeptic when it comes to integrity ond politicians, but try...maybe you can do something worthwhile for a change.

#515: I have two horses, both of which mean the WORLD to me. I do not show, and dislike riding in circles in an arena. Rather, I trail ride, and to not be able to do so would be a HUGE disappointment, not to mention take the enjoyment out of riding (for the most part). Just like our biking, hiking, & nature-loving counter-parts, I \*LOVE\* to be out enjoying nature on the back of [one of] my best friends!!

#517: We need to help preserve the opportunity to ride outside of an arena. The benefit to everyone is great.

#522: I have 3 yr.old twin grandkids that love horses and want to go riding w/nana all the time.How can I tell them that we can't go camping and ride in the woods anymore,because DNR thinks we're not responsible enough to keep the land safe for other animals and people.

#524: I am very concerned about the trend Michigan is taking towards reducing and restricting the trails open to horseback riding. I feel that we are being unfairly targeted. I urge you to help protect the rights of all of the horse owners and trail riders here in Michigan by supporting this bill. Sincerely, Laurie Lemont

#527: I love enjoying the beauty & variety of our state lands while riding. For years I have encouraged other equestrians to ride the trails with me.

#528: It is very important to me and my family to be able to ride our horses on state land. Please help us keep this privilege.

#532: The United States was established by people riding & driving teams of horses accross this country getting from state to state. Horses are a big part of our nations greatness. Please don't take away our riding places that our hard earn tax dollars support and please remember that we Michigan horse owner citizens contrubute to state lands too.

#533: As a long time horseback trail rider at Pigeon River, I've been greatly distressed to see the severe restrictions currently in place there, especially since there has never been valid reason for doing so. Many states have welcomed horseback riders on their public lands to their economic benefit. I encourage the Michigan legislature to do the same and give us back our "right to ride". Thank you!

#534: The spectacular Blueberry Ridge trail system in Marquette County was closed to horses in response to complaints from hikers, bikers and cross-country skiers about horses causing "damage" to the trails and "replaced" with a few miles of trails on junk land - flat, boring and dry. We need to recognize that all users cause damage and that horses, who carried and pulled the entire world into the 20th century without damaging the planet, are being unfairly singled out because a lot of selfish people expect their needs to be accommodated at the expense of other users - bikers want trail surfaces that are just like pavement only without the concrete, so horses, who disturb that compacted surface (and compaction is just as "bad" as erosion), have got to go; cross-country skiers want perfect little tracks, so snowshoers and mushers have got to go, etc. Public land is for everyone, and land managers need to show some leadership by insisting that it be shared rather than caving in to the largest user groups.

#540: Try it you'll like it! I dont ride much, but I do participate when my family does. You will find that trail riding is a family event. Why put these kids on the street so they can find "other" hobbies?

**#544: Trails for horses, are good for horses, riders, and the local ecconomies! Win, win, win. They also volunteer to maintain property.**

#545: Please Enact HB 4610 - Michigan Right to Ride! It is more important to our State than you may know.

#547: I have rode Horses for 30 plus years. Also did the Dirt & Mountain Bike thing. Bikes do more damage & faster IMHO.

#551: Our state lands are being taken away from us & this needs to stop! The DNR needs to listen to "the people" & what their needs are along with what is best for the environment. We the people need to stand up & fight for our rights!!!! It is unexceptable to me to be highly restricted & have no factual data to back it up. Why do we continue to but more and more land but restict the use of the land? Where is the logic???

#554: Horse back riders have extremely low impact on wildlife, trails, campgrounds etc. Riding is a family event and should be strongly encouraged in Michigan. Michigan should be encouraging its citizens to go out

**an enjoy the State Lands that "WE" bought and paid for with our dollars. Someone must be forgetting who are the owners and who are the employees.**

**#555:** My family rides the trails as much as we can. Whatever we take in, we take out. We stay on the marked trail so nature is not disturbed. Actually, I have never witnessed any horsemen disrespecting the rules. But I can say, I have seen plenty of other groups misusing the land. Also, there is a great piece of state land over by Hudson, Mi. It's the Lake Hudson State Park. When I was younger, and before it became state land, my grandparents had a farm by there, and the riding was awesome. Unfortunately, the DNR closed it to all horses, and one more piece of great riding land was lost. Maybe we could get them to let us open it up. I'm sure that a few trail groups could get together with the DNR to open up trails and set up a horse camp!

**#558:** Think of what our youth would be doing if they could no longer ride their horses!

**#559:** I live close to State Land in Lapeer county that is designated for Hunting. Horse and riders will be ticketed if they ride in there. i don't understand why a horse does so much more damage than a hiker and or dogs.

**#560:** Areas of the pigeon River country forrest, Areas of the Jordan Valley, are closed to horse use. I think this is unfair, we pay taxes and are respectful of the land. It should be able to be used.

**#561:** Let's everyone enjoy all the trails ! When riders on horseback know the trails they can be very helpful with search and rescue. Equine tourisim is a terrific way to encourange more money to be spent in our beautiful state.

**#568:** Let's everyone enjoy all the trails ! When riders on horseback know the trails they can be very helpful with search and rescue. Equine tourisim is a terrific way to encourange more money to be spent in our beautiful state.

**#569:** I think horse riders should have a place to ride in every state park that would be feasible.

**#574:** I believe that horse owners should have the same rights to use state and county trails as other sportsman.

**#590:** Bald Mountain State Park in Lake Orion, MI

**#594:** There are trails at Elk Hill that have been closed that were open for years.

**#596:** give the american tax payer their land back.. the land doesn't belong to the dnr or any goverment agency

**#597:** THIS IS A HUGE FAMILY ACTIVITY AND 4H ACTIVITY. AS A 4H LEADER AND FAMIY THAT TRAIL RIDES WE DO NOT WANT OUR TRAILS TAKEN AWAY FROM US.

**#598:** Horses do not do damage like quads and dirt bikes. Why should horse people be discriminated against.

**#604:** Those of us who have horses, and who wish to enjoy the outdoors and the beauty of our public parks, should be able to have the same access as hikers, joggers, people running their dogs, bikers, cross-country skiers, etc. Please do not turn us away from our beautiful parks where we have the opportunity to enjoy our recreational time with our horses.



**#606: Please pass this legislation so we horseback riders can have more access to public lands. My husband and I have spent many falls camping in Pigeon River and riding to look at the elk. But with the limited spaces, we quit going. It was too hard to haul for 6+ hours and not know if we would have a spot to camp.**

**#613: The horse industry is a huge part of Michigan. Being able to ride and enjoy this great state is important to me. I buy state and metro park passes every year, I gladly support the parks, so please support us, by letting us use them to ride in along with all the other atv's, motorcycles, bikes etc. And we are environmentally friendly.**

**#615: I live in Gladwin County where a large portion of the AuSable State forest is restricted to horses (Lame Duck Preserve). Hunters are allowed with their dogs.**

**#616: We need to expand the availability of trails and public land use in Michigan. Horses are low to no negative impact on the environment and also a good opportunity to expand the tourism in Michigan.**

**#618: Horseback riders should have equal access to lands that host other public users such as cyclists and hunters; we are compatible users that are conscious of others' rights and have little impact on native wildlife.**

**#621: I am a member of several Trail Associations and we trail ride alot. I don't want to see us losing any trails in Michigan**

**#630: Color me confused ... people who ride horses are not permitted to enjoy the beautiful parklands and natural trails that many varieties of wildlife travel on a daily basis? What exactly is the difference? Oh wait ... deer, elk, raccoons, etc. won't stop to pick up any trash they might find and don't pay any taxes to support the preservation of these wonderful escapes. When and why did Michigan become a beautiful state to look at - just don't touch it?**

**#634: Please keep Michigan's trails opened to horseback riders. I am a 4-H leader and our club does an annual trail ride at the Ionia State Recreation Area, which is a highlight each year for many of the members of the club. Additionally, many of the club members and their families, including myself, also trail ride at other public horseback riding trails around the state. Thank you for your support!**

**#637: The equine industry in the state of Michigan has already suffered a blow with the closing of Jackson Harness raceway and other racetracks due to legislation regarding Racinos. There aren't many places to enjoy recreation riding and state land is off limits to horses in the Pinckney Michigan area. Please help Michigan retain this industry.**

**#640: Please look at the report "The Economic Impact of the Michigan Equine Industry" at [www.horsecountinmichigan.com](http://www.horsecountinmichigan.com). Thank you.**

**#651: We horse owners pay taxes like bike riders, hunters and ATV users and yet we are pushed aside because our animals cause damage or some such nonsense. The snowmobiles and ATV's also tear up the land. Please allow us the use of our state land for our QUIET enjoyment.**

**#654: We deserve to ride where the bikers and hikers are allowed also. I for one don't like to ride down the road. Please pass this bill.**

**#657: Horses and horsemen generate a large amount of revenue in the state of Michigan on a daily basis. Recreational trails have long been a means to get away from it all, and enjoy the recreation areas that exist**

within the state. This activity generates tourist dollars for the communities near those recreation areas. Closing trails to horsemen is literally cutting off your nose to spite your face. If these areas are closed, Michigan horsemen will take their vacations in adjoining states that do offer trail riding and camping facilities for horsemen. Michigan loses.

**#660: As natural resource managers for a government agency, we are aware of the many challenges inherent in providing quality recreation experiences for diverse users. We respect site-specific decisions to restrict or prevent some uses in some places some of the time. In our career, equestrians have often been the most courteous, thoughtful, and dedicated trail riders, volunteering thousands of hours for trail maintenance and land stewardship. In particular, we laud the efforts of Backcountry Horsemen of America, who work tirelessly on behalf of many outdoor enthusiasts. By signing this petition, we wish to encourage MDNR to continue to seek ways to work WITH and not in spite of organizations that share your mission to care for the land.**

#665: There is a large area of state-owned land in Hamilton (Allegan County) Michigan near Silver Creek County Park that is now off-limits to horse riders. Also, there is an area of state land near the Bass River Recreation Area in Robinson Township (Grand Haven) Michigan.

#667: My taxes bought those lands we should be able to use them

**#668: This is again the DNR over reacting to a problem where they try to eliminate what they believe to be the cause of the problem. I have lived and worked in Luce County my entire life and would welcome the chance to sit down and speak with those who are concerned that horse riding is detrimental to our forests and lands.**

#670: My horses do more then show. They also enjoy all the trail riding that we do. Trail riding is very important for the horse and rider, it allows them to do something with out the rigors of a show.

#672: I have been an equestrian and trail rider my entire life, and a 4-H leader for 10+ years. I grew up going trail riding with the 4-H club I was in as a youth and encourage my club members to get out and enjoy Michigan's trail riding camps as much as possible. Please keep horse trails open and available for our enjoyment and for the youth of our state. Also, don't forget the huge amounts of revenue from people like me - an average long weekend of camping I pay out \$300-\$500 in preparation and while on our trip.

#681: I show and trail ride my horses! The public land belongs to everyone who pays taxes!

#693: Please consider allowing horses on to all trails in Michigan. This country was founded by people riding horses and it is a natural, fun way to see nature. Horses are wonderful and deserve to be taken into all places state owned.

#702: Trailriding is a great experience for young and old alike. There are few physical activities that grandmas and grandchildren can enjoy together. Horseback riding is one of those activities, and the ability to share the love of horses and nature in the wilderness of Michigan should NOT be discouraged, it should be ENCOURAGED and promoted by our government.

#707: One of the most beautiful things I have found in my life, is horseback riding the trails of Michigan... My neighbors and myself look forward to matching a day off from our schedules, so we can take our horses and experience riding in one of the Michigan parks that have bridle paths. I hope this state preserves this land as it is, for all who enjoy the sport and hobby of horseback riding.

**#711: What could be more natural for the environment than horses !! Teddy Roosevelt (who was instrumental in starting the parks by the way) would have been outraged by the very thought of horses not being allowed on trails!! Can we please use some common sense here.**

**#714: I believe in Caseville near Sand Rd. there is some land closed to horses, as well as some in Tuscola County.**

**#715: We feel the denial of horses/riders on Michigan State Lands is totally unjustified and unfair. This action will cause the vast number of Michigan riders to travel OUTSIDE Michigan for their horseback riding vacations, thus keeping them out of touch with Michigan's tourism opportunities and further reducing income for Michigan retailers. And where does this end??? Will we outlaw Michigan hunting and fishing on state lands as well??? Let's NOT fall victim to the pressures of a select few who do not understand the impact of unjust laws and regulations!**

**#716: State Land in Clyde Twp, MI Minden City Game Area, Minden City, MI**

**#718: Although I, as a Hunter, have had some problems in the past with Horse Back Riders on public lands not wearing Hunter Orange, or having a bell or some warning device on their saddle to let us hunters know of their presence, I still believe they as law abiding Tax Payers have just as much right to the PUBLIC LAND as I do. They pay for that land just as much as we as Hunters do and they have every right to enjoy it. Or is this the hidden agenda to take the Public Land away first from Horse Back Riders, Hikers, Fisherman and then us Hunters? We tax the Public Fund these lands through our tax moneys, and although there are some smaller problems, such as what I pointed out earlier, Leave the PUBLIC LANDS to the Public!**

**#725: There are hundreds of trailways open to bikers and hikers in MI. I believe many of those trailways should allow equestrians. Individuals who cannot walk or ride a bike should be allowed to ride on a horse or in a horsedrawn vehicle on the trailways to enjoy the outdoors. Keep public lands available for equestrian use.**

**#726: Horses are not only part of our national heritage, but are also important in both physical and mental capacities for their riders. Economically they are beneficial to the State needing tack stores, horse trailers, feed stores, vets and farriers.**

**#733: We have owned horses for years and have enjoyed riding the trails in Michigan. Now we are being banned from them. Please allow us and our grandchildren the right to ride Michigan trails.**

**#734: I would like to express my overwhelming concern for the restrictions being placed on public lands. Any time we would ride on designated trails we were always cognizant of our responsibility to make sure we took everything out with us that we brought in. We took every precaution to not disturb the surroundings as it was the pristine nature of the land that attracted us to the area in the first place. We must remain responsible stewards of the space in which we live and play. To allow special interest groups to dictate their own agenda does not seem right, however. It appears very arrogant to suggest that they are the only ones who care about our shared environment. Responsible horse owners should be able to ride on these lands as long as there is no real, documented, evidence that we are ruining this environment. So far I have seen none.**

**#738: The suburbs have made riding "out in the country" hazardous. When I take my Trail horse to the woods he's just thrilled to see what's around the next bend. And he won't have to deal with nuts on crotch rockets or**

drivers honking at him to see if he'll spook. With education to all we can share the trails, whether we ride, hike, or bike in the last open spaces.

#739: I've been riding all my life. And live were snowmobiles travel. They never ask to travel over your land. Sometimes there is damage to crops. People on horse back respect property and always ask us to cross. NO damage to crops. I don't see your government stopping the snowmobile. The money that horses brings in is as great as snowmobiles.

#741: I love horses. I ride every day. it's my way of life. I think it's a good way for kids or anybody and everybody to learn how to take care of things. and what it means to love and have your own.

**#743: I think this is the first step in the government regulating use of state lands for everybody. I think eventually bikes, even hikers will be regulated. There seems to be some movement for natural lands to be completely people free. Look out. This is just the beginning..... I think right now horseback riders are the easier target. Just like I think the DNR used that one single deer with wasting disease to outlaw deer feeding all over the state. They were just waiting for a reason, no matter how circumstantial, or remote the possibilities are.**

#744: I live on Gibbons rd. and right behind me is state land that horses are not allowed on. It is called Comstock Hills. I would love to be able to ride the state land in lower mich. It is all off limits to horses. I understand it is saved for the hunters but anyone would be stupid to ride the woods during hunting season. Please open it up for horses. There is a lot of beautiful trails to ride along Black River. Thanks.....Karen

#745: I am so disappointed that legislatures are taking away our rights to ride horses on state owned lands because of a few bad apples and special interests. Horses do not do damage, people do! Please give us back our right to ride! Horses are a big economic industry here in Michigan.

#746: I believe state land should be open to horses. Horses are a part of nature and should not be viewed as obtrusive or damaging to the environment. The horse industry contributes a significant amount to the economics of Michigan. I also believe horse groups are often the most involved in maintaining the trail system.

#748: As public roads become increasingly more dangerous to ride our horses on I feel that being able to have an alternative like riding our trails is very important and is a right that should not be denied, for us and our children.

#749: Please don't close our trails to horses. My young daughters ride the trails with me and their friends go with us also. It's a great way to get my kids out of the house and away from the computer and in the great outdoors. Plus it opens up all kinds of discussions about nature, and even history as we talk about what the pioneers must have went thru to cross the country with wagons and on horseback.

#750: Progress has taken just about all the places I used ride around my home away. I really rely on my state and metro parks to ride our horses.

**#751: Holly Recreation Area had horse trails till 1994 that we lost to mountain Biking. The original staging area and trails have been taken over by the MMBA and horses are not permitted to ride there anymore. It**

would be great to see horses welcomed back and recognized horse trails in the Holly Recreation Area located in Holly Michigan

**#755: I fully support HB 4610 - Michigan Right to Ride. I am a lifelong resident of Michigan and have enjoyed horseback riding all over the state for many years. As a tax paying resident I believe I have the right to ride on public land, as much as others have the right to hike, bike or pursue other activities on public land. I also promise to be a good steward of the land and not damage it.**

**#756: Please help protect citizens' right to use and enjoy our wonderful natural areas of the beautiful state of Michigan. Trail riding and camping are family activities and there are so few things families enjoy together these days.**

**#759: As taxpayers our chosen sport is horseback riding. Please I ask you, to please sign this petition "Michigan Right to Ride" in taxpayers funded parks. Thanks everyone!**

**#760: In our bad economy, I can't understand why our State Leaders do not understand what the equestrian community contribute to our economy in the way of local business and tourism**

**#765: Our riding areas are becoming so limited-would greatly appreciate some serious consideration on this matter.**

**#777: My wife and I are new to equestrian activities. We are impressed with the dedication of the people we have met. They are interested in maintaining and protecting the trails they ride on. They are passionate about having access to trails in all parts of the state.**

**#779: State Land, much needed for our enjoyment of riding, alot of equine riders only have state land to ride on, we pay taxes on this land, should have all the priviledges as any-one-else.**

**#782: I know the Pigeon River system well, as my wife and daughters horse-camped there for many years. The problem was the DNR's lack of real efforts to define or solve any real or percieved problems. The solution to the pressures on our natural resource should be to expand oppurtunities. Horses and hunters have complemented each other for ever. I am a hunter and have hunted Grouse in the Pigeon River off horses in the past, so when the ban occured in the name of hunter's rights I know first hand whose rights were taken away.**

**#783: I don't even own any horses and I think that ANY non motorized use of our state lands should be allowed. I have seen wild animals in pastures with horses and/or cows many times so I know wild animals can coexist with horses in their area. I wish I had horses so I could see so much more of our public lands. Very few people can hike in the distances you can ride a horse. KEEP OUR PUBLIC LANDS PUBLIC!!!!!!**

**#784: michigan is missing out on a lot of revenu from riders not only in mich. but many other states around us. we have some of the best rideing spots in the country, let us ride on them. a horse leave behind little more than a foot print much like any deer or elk ect.**

**#795: Horse riders generate alot of money for Michigan,also where else should we ride? The busy roads? This is very dangerous to riders and the auto traffic. We need free access to state land**

**#800: Public lands are set aside and supported by our taxes for our use and enjoyment and any activity that does not harm this assest should be allowed. Additionally the State has been developing Michigan as a great outdoors tourist desination and closing public access to this activity hurts this reputation.**

**#809: I am an equestrian and I support HB 4610. The Horse Industry is an unrecognized economic asset in Michigan contributing millions to the economy through agriculture and tourism. Miles of non-motorized trails are being built across Michigan, but horses are being excluded by communities and by design by the fact that trails are being paved with asphalt. I have yet to hear a good reason for excluding horses. I have been told that our rigs are too large and would require a large trail head. Those rigs, trucks and trailers, are big business, are we to be penalized for investing in the economy? Horses are more natural on trails than miles of polluting asphalt. Horses are legitimate non-motorized trail users. Urban sprawl is eliminating open space needed to keep horses and make trails. I support protecting areas where horses have a precedence of use.**

**#814: I live right across the road from hundreds of acres of state land that is designated for hunting only. When we have spoken with the DNR, they tell us people don't want horses on the trails because they ruin the trails and that hunters pay for the land by buying licenses. We would be happy to pay for the privilege of riding on state lands - permit, license, sticker, whatever. Give us the opportunity to enjoy the land the same as the hunters. My friends and I ride on this state land in non-hunting seasons and the trash we find on the trails is not from horses, it's from people we assume have been back there hunting; chip bags, beer bottles, pop bottles, candy wrappers, etc. Our horse friends pack saddle bags and if we take anything in, we bring it back out with us. We are courteous to anyone we may encounter, do not abuse the land or trails, and we appreciate the beauty around us. Have a horseback riding season where we have to purchase a permit to ride. We are anxious to abide by the rules, given the chance. Thank you!**

**#816: People NEED spaces to enjoy the outdoors and reconnect. Horseback riding provides a quiet, natural manner to enjoy the outdoors. Please adopt HB 4610 in its entirety.**

**#822: I am 69 years old and no longer hike or ride my bike 10-20 miles as I did in my 30's and 40's. For the last 20 years, I have been horseback riding. I can ride my horse all day and enjoy the fresh air and beautiful scenery here in Michigan. It is not fair that many non-motorized trails discriminate against equestrians. Many of us are older women. All non-motorized trails should accommodate equestrians. Please make sure that this right to ride legislation is not just limited to one type of trail. Equestrians need a whole section in the Environmental Law. Thanks for righting things for equestrian trail users. We like destinations just like bikers and hikers.**

**#824: We need more places to ride NOT less! Thank you**

**#825: In an age where our Federal and State Governments are screaming that we are so unhealthy and they are regulating us into better health whether we want it or not - how can they take away one of the greatest forms of exercise and one of the most effective forms of mental health I can think of - trail riding. Additionally I think they need to be brought up to speed on just how much money we horse people spend on our sport... Adopt HB 4610.**

**#826: I support Enact HB 4610 Michigan Right to Ride. We have been going up to the Pigeon River Area on Horse Back for years for at least one week every fall & enjoy it as one of our favorite vacations. Of anywhere we can go in the United States or even outside of the U.S., this is one of our favorites. I think it is a shame that we have lost the privilege to ride in some of this beautiful area. It is soooo nice to be able to go on some of the less traveled areas. Even the hunters have said they do not mind us in the woods.**

**#827: We need more places to ride so we can invite people from other states to ride. Instead of taking riding areas away so that we will have to go to other states to ride. Therefore taking money away from Michigan when the states needs the tourist dollars. William Weeks**

#829: The current trail system in Michigan could be greatly improved/expanded. In the lower southeast area of Michigan the trails are very minimal. Please do not take away the few trails that we currently have.

#830: State game area located in Beards Hills is hundreds of acres only designated for hunters. Horseback riding could be integrated into this land and hunting seasons very nicely. If the obstacle is that hunters buy licenses, have the riders buy a license too,

**#832: I started riding on the trails in Michigan when I was 4 or 5 years old. It was a family recreation for us and my whole family went although we only could haul 2 horses we would take turns riding through out the vacation. As I grew up many trails have been added and changed. When I started my own family it became a vacation time for us. I can not stress enough how this activity was a GOOD impact on my son. Through his 4-H, and FFA extended families we have enjoyed many trails and outdoor experiences. I have always believed that experience nature and learning to respect it will only encourage our future generations to take care of the wilderness that too many take for granted. Horseback riding has been a means of transportation to explore the wilds for centuries and I believe that the Michigan residents and out of state vacationer should continue to have this great gift. Now that I have reached the FALL of my life I am looking forward to traveling the trails until I am too old to do so. It would be a great loss on my part as well as the many families that I have seen who love and respect the wilds of Michigan. PLEASE CONTINUE TO ALLOW THIS PRIVILEGE**  
Sincerely Susan LeCureux

#833: The state is considering closing the horse camp at Rollaways in South Branch. Please do not! It is such a great place.

**#839: As a hiker, I have no objection to horseback riders on any of our trails as long as they respect the land and pack out their litter.**

#843: I have heard rumors about closing Goose Creek and the South Branch riding camps. Please do not support this as these are beautiful areas for equine people to ride and camp. Also, the Gladwin state land off of Joy Rd. There is no reason to limit any riding on these thousands of acres. Support H.B. 4610.

#845: Horses are so much less destructive to our trails than machines, please do not stop us from riding out in nature. The horsemen and women that I know are very respectful of others using trails. I enjoy hiking with my husband and dogs as much as riding on trails and I believe hikers and riders work very well together.

#848: Horses are FAR less destructive to the environment than ORVs. Back country trail riding could be a money maker for the state of Michigan. It boggles my mind why horse back riding in the back country is even an issue.

**#851: Having been a MTRA member for over 25 years, participating in many workbees to improve and develop camps and trails at no cost to the state it would be nice to be able to enjoy the trails the only way I can now that I am disabled.**

#854: If a few people are abusing the land deal with them. There are many groups that spend countless hours improving and maintaining trails at no cost to the taxpayer. Equine owners also spend money every month of every year into Michigans economy to maintain their hobby unlike the snowmobilers and orvers. But these two groups have thousands more miles of trails. Why the difference?

#857: I have been riding horses and camping in Michigans public land for over 30 years and have not seen any severe damage from the use of the land and streams in the riding hicking trails nor in the campgrounds. It is an atrocity to think that we will no longer be able to camp and ride in the land we support with our taxes.

#865: I have seen no signs of damage from riding horses on trails or campgrounds.

#874: I can't believe I even have to sign this petition, to close off a portion of trails to horses seems to me to be a little idiotic. Specially when ATV's and snowmobiles are all over the place. A group of horses have less impact than a group of ATV's. Please don't limit the areas that horses can use! ! !

**#876: Seriously!!! Get NATURAL! When we ride, the wildlife comes to us! It is quiet, peaceful, and natural to be on a horse in the woods or on the trails.**

**#879: Horses are part of mother nature they do not effect the other animals like motor vichiles and thier exhaust.**

#880: Why is it that we are paying taxes for state land that we, as equestrians, are told we cannot even use? BUT...if I had an ATV or snowmobile then I could DESTROY the land with that as much as I wanted to? That doesn't make any sense to me. Horses, and horse riders, DO NOT destroy the land. We respect it. We do not make the air toxic with exhaust, we are not tearing through the wilderness with our deafening buzzing engines making the animals nervous or move out of the area. We are riding a part of NATURE, that belongs in nature. If we were to ride up to an elk, for instance, on a horse it would look at us with curiosity. If we rode even in the area of elk with an ATV they would run. What does that say?? Please, Do not keep us out any longer. We have a right as tax paying citizens to ride on ANY State property we choose.

#881: I have 1200 acreas of State Game area behind me that I am not able to ride on, sadly. You wonder with all the technology, cell phones, email, voice mail, texting and our toxic environment.. that one of the last saving graces on God's earth is to saddle up and hit the trails for time moment of silent and truth, aromas, of our awesome forests. It is a great form of exercise, peace of mind and nurturing an appreciation for some of Michigan's finest forests. Becky Argue

**#887: As a child, we used to camp with our horses at Lost Nations in Hillsdale, Michigan. What a beautiful area to trail ride. Unfortunately, now we can't take our grandkids there to experience this wonderful area. Please allow us to ride there. Horses are not destructive as are ATV's and 4-wheelers. The camping with horses generates lots of dollars for the areas in terms of food, drinks, hay, grain, gas, etc. Please think of this.**

#894: have a friend that lives in Michigan and I once lived there myself. I believe that all public land should be available for anyone to ride on. Any state parks and such may be closed to riding but is usually posted if horseback riding is not allowed. I think that all states should have open riding on public lands.

#899: Horses and riders should have the same access to DNR public lands as any other sports enthusiasts, i.e. hunters, snowmobilers, ATV riders, hikers, birdwatchers, etc. We have a gigantic \$8 billion dollar industry impact on the state. I believe that the legislators should consider this, before making the serious mistake of banning horses from DNR public lands. That would be a huge error.

**#904: There are no issues that cannot be addressed in a positive manner regarding trail riders and the use of these public lands. These areas have been set aside years ago for the use of the tax paying public. Is this the beginning of the shut down of all DNR public lands for all but a few special interest groups? Or, another one**



**of our lost Freedoms? Trail riders are always willing to help out, it doesn't matter the cause, if the State of Michigan needs support for public lands just ask. There are more people out of work now than ever before willing and able. We are part of Michigan's Spirit!**

**#906: It is very important that the state land and the trails are preserved for future generations. Families camping with horses and riding the trails is just a small but important part of are heritage. Families hiking or hunting together is another part. A future without this would be a dim future.**

**#912: The ability of horse owners to have access to public lands is a valuable resource to Michigan citizens. Not only is the equine industry a major business in Michigan, but horseback riding is a healthy recreational sport that allows people of all ages to enjoy the outdoors and is a fabulous famiy activity.**

**#913: We enjoy coming to Michigan to ride the trails and to enjoy the forest and wild life. By closing down and restricting travel in areas such as Pigeon River Country State Forest I will take my family and go to other states that welcome horsemen**

**#915: I really looked forward to riding my horse up at Pigeon River this year for the first time until I found out that horses were restricted of all things. For years I have gone up there during spring break to camp and look for elk and I always thought it would be fun and something new to do if I brought my horse along. Please don't limit horse riding areas!**

**#919: We have five horses and do love riding in our state forest. We bought our retirement home close to state land just for this purpose,lets not let the dnr shut it down, it is our tax dollars that purchased it and maintain it. lets band together and fight for this bill.**

**#920: I live backed up to public land and I am not allowed to ride my horses on it. I find that very discouraging and completely unfair. I pay a hefty amount in property tax and yet I am not allowed to ride in the woods around me. I think that there is no harm in letting horses in to the state land. We have a very large number of horses in the St. Clair, Macomb, and Oakland counties. People don't have the money to show like they used to, but still enjoy thier animals and I think it is the least we could do to let them ride on public land.**

**#923: I have been a horse owner and trail riding enthusiast for 45 years. I was raised in Michigan and educated at Michigan State Univ with a BS in Large Animal Physiology. I moved to Ohio in 1983 to complete a MS in Zoonotic Disease from OSU. I regularly travel home to Michigan to join my horse club (Jackson Western Horsemen) for numerous events, including frequent trips to Waterloo Rec Area and Goose Creek/Pigeon River. The idea of these natural state owned areas becoming off limits to horsemen is disturbing. Trail riding and horse camping are environmentally low impact and very "green" activities. I would like to see statistical data detailing the detrimental environmental impact of horse trail and camping activities on Michigan's state land. Snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, and ATV trail use must surely impact natural areas to a greated extent than horseback riding in Michigan. Horseback riding is such a peaceful, family-oriented, low fossil fuel activity with significant historical roots in Michigan. It must not become a lost art or activity.**

**#924: My daughter and I are avid trail riders in Michigan, respecting and obeying the rules and etiquettes of our Michigan trails. It would be a shame to close some of these beautiful trails to the horse enthusiasts that have been born and raised riding on them.**

#925: Please support this Bill which will help Michigan's economy by stimulating both agriculture and tourism.

#927: Horses on trails throughout the state seems to me, to be one of the most natural ways of enjoying the beautiful areas of Michigan! Our horses do not tear up the ground with tracks and tires, we don't spill oil or gas, our "exhaust" does not pollute the air. We've been trail riding these areas for so long and I've yet to see anything that would warrant closing these trails in my opinion. Please keep these areas open to horses so that we can continue to enjoy this as a family activity and so that our future generations can enjoy it as well. The real beauty of Michigan cannot be seen from a road.

#931: Horses should be allowed on trails ... they help this world more than trucks and cars.

#939: Yes, there is State owed land directly behind our house that is closed to riding. This is located in Tuscola County, the southern corner of the county. Thanks.

#942: WHAT HAPPEN TO THE SENIORS DISCOUNT FOR CAMPING. WHY DOSE THE EQUINE MONEY HAVE TO GO TO THE GENERAL FUNDS IN STEAD OF THE TRAILS TO KEEP THEM MAINTAIN

#943: I agree to this completely. There is not enough places to go on a horse.

#948: As a life-long resident and tax payer it's heartbreaking to see the trails closed to horses. Horses were here well before the mountain bikes and skate boarders. They don't pollute the environment, or scare off the wildlife with noise and fumes. Their passing is quite and natural. The equine industry is a multi-billion dollar business in this state. The surrounding states are happy to see Michigan trailers roll across their state lines and spend money. Horses are the eyes and ears in the back country, and it's a huge mistake to pull them out of these areas (Pigeon River area especially).

#952: With the increasing amount of developments, places to enjoy our equine animals is decreasing and fast. These horses can't be sucluded and "run off" eventually doing so will cause problems.

#958: PEOPLE WITH HORSES BRING MONEY TO MANY AREAS TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY. THEY DON'T HARM THE LAND AND WE NEED THE LAND TO TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION.

#960: Allegan State Game Area

#963: I have been horseback riding in the Pigeon River area for more than 15 years. I, and the others who ride along with me, are always respectful of plant and animal life when riding on public lands. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

#966: Horses and pack animals are an important part of our heritage. We MUST provide a SAFE place for people to ride and preserve our heritage. Horse riding trails can be a very big tourism draw to our state as well. We now have people from MI going out West to ride. Keep them HERE by providing safe trails. Please Help.

#969: I have enjoyed riding all over Michigan since the early 70's and the trails and camps have remained pretty much unchanged except for the man made changes, such as the steps at Goose Creek or bridges over water. There is more elk than ever at Vanderbilt, one of our favorite places to ride. It is a very sad thing to think that my kids or grandkids may not be able to experience the wonderful wildlife and scenery that Michigan has to offer. What a environmentally friendly way to see the country too. Horses have been around forever and have way less impact on the environment than motorized forms of transportation. The riders help economically as well. We buy gas, food and supplies in all the towns we visit. If we lose our right to ride in our

own state, we will be forced to spend that money in other states. It would be in Michigans best interest to preserve our right to ride.

#982: Don't take away our right to ride!

#986: I have alot of land around us that we would love to be able to ride on.

#995: As the mother of two young daughters that love to ride horses, I strongly support the Right to Ride Bill! We do not have cable or video games, my girls are OUTSIDE getting exercise!

#996: In today's tough economic times why isn't the state and federal governments encouraging trail riding? Especially when it is a multi-billion dollar industry. Horse people around the country are willing to spend the money just to enjoy our beautiful state and ride on some of the best trails around. Please let everyone enjoy our state land. Keep our trails open!

# 1006:Apr 14, 2009, Illinois: We lived in MI most of our lives and have spent much of our time camping and riding the MI trails. We have ridden the shore to shore ride as well have camped in many different camps. I would like for our children and Grandchildren to be able to continue this wonderful tradition. Michigan has so much to offer with the beautiful forest, streams and lakes...a great deal of money is spent on recreation. Please keep the trails and camps open so that our friends and children can continue to enjoy this wonderful sport. Thank you

# 1008:Apr 14, 2009, , Michigan: We have very good friends that ride trails, We know how much they enjoy it. The whole family ride, what a great time they have as a family.

# 1009:Apr 14, 2009, , Illinois: People wonder why there is so much road rage, mass shootings and the like. It's because we can't recreate! We need an outlet and trail riding fills that perfectly for so many. Please let us do so.

# 1011:Apr 14, 2009, Michigan: I feel very fortunate to live in such a wonderful part of the country. I have only had a horse for five years, but I am an avid trail rider. I will saddle up anytime day or night 365 days of the year. It is truly sad to think that people who don't ride much, or not at all have the ability to decide where equestrians can and can't ride. This country was built on horseback and places like the Grand Canyon were probably first seen by horseback. It is truly a great way to see this country.

# 1012:Apr 14, 2009, , Illinois: Every time we visit Michigan we leave our money at: \$horse camps,\$gas stations,\$fast food places,\$feed stores,\$Walmart,\$grocery stores,\$restaurants,\$movie theaters,supper clubs/rest.,antique stores, .....if ELECTED officials close the horse trails my \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ goes to other states with horse trails.

# 1017:Apr 14, 2009, Michigan: Those of us who enjoy Michigan's state land on horseback ask our friends who show, breed or race horses to join us in preserving equestrian access to state land. Remember -- once access is gone, it's gone forever! Whether they ride or not, let your friends know about this initiative, they can help too. Thanks!

# 1018:Apr 15, 2009, , Illinois: Horseback riding is an excellent hobby for all age groups, children through senior citizens. Please keep our beautiful trails open.

# 1028:Apr 15, 2009, , Michigan: I proposed to my wife at Inspiration Point east of Cornwell Flooding in the Pigeon over 10 years ago...I will never forget that moment. It was so special. I remember riding up the big

**hill to the top and getting off and down on one knee-what a beautiful treasured memory---this too is off limits! I know of others who have done this as well...how sad.....**

# 1038:Apr 15, 2009, , Arizona: Although I am not a horse rider, I support all Americans right to spend time on our public lands. Our tax dollars need to be spent improving our quality of life not restricting it.

# 1046:Apr 15, 2009, , Michigan: Please do not use my tax dollars to restrict and / or shut down more PUBLIC land.

# 1050:Apr 15, 2009, Michigan: Public land is for the use of all citizens, not those chosen by politicians and lobbyists.

**# 1051:Apr 15, 2009, , Michigan: I've been riding horses for the last 50 years. I believe that the preservation of pack and saddle trail ways is a heritage that would be criminal to restrict or eliminate. Passing this BILL would preserve a way of life. Would you consider signing a BILL to stop EQUINE Travel on Mackinaw Island? NO, I THINK NOT...**

# 1052:Apr 16, 2009, , Michigan: Keep our public lands open to horses , our family has been camping and riding the trails for years.The kids are grown and one has a child of his own, let the next generation enjoy the beautiful land of Michigan.

**# 1057:Apr 16, 2009, , Michigan: If the public lands of Michigan are not for responsible public use who is it for ?**

# 1066:Apr 16, 2009, , Michigan: Please keep public land open for all of the public to enjoy. Wheels, hooves, or feet should all be allowed equal access to OUR land.

# 1069:Apr 16, 2009, Michigan: The state owns a large area of land in N.E. Kalamazoo county north of "C" Ave between 42nd St. and 43rd St that is marked closed to horses.

# 1079:Apr 17, 2009, Michigan: I have just gotten the horse that I have wanted since childhood. Having the ability to ride trails and through woods is one of the greatest pleasures a rider can have. This is a wonderful, natural right that all riders should have throughout Michigan.

**# 1082:Apr 17, 2009, , Michigan: I can't believe that we have come to this place in time where we have to defend our right to be able to ride a horse when man has used horses for thousand of years.**

# 1086:Apr 17, 2009, , Michigan I ride at a lot of these state parks and back country trails.I would hate to see them close.The Roll a Ways is my favarite and I've heard rumer that they want to close that down too.We pay to use it and the trail riders and different horse clubs maintain most of it ourselves.

# 1100:Apr 19, 2009, Michigan Please protect our right to ride the horse trails of Michigan where we can enjoy our horses and the country. I have been a rider all my life and have enjoyed the trails and hope future generations will be able to do the same. Trail riders have always been willing to work and maintain the trails. What other users can say the same?

# 1101:Apr 19, 2009, Michigan I feel that people should be able to ride horses in the Pigeon River area, or anywhere in the state on back roads.

# 1108: Apr 20, 2009, Michigan Pigeon River area

**# 1111: Apr 20, 2009, Michigan Michigan is the most horse-unfriendly state that I know. OH, IN, KY, IL, MO, etc are very horse friendly. And, even though Michigan trails, terrain and footing is much better than these other states, Michigan riders are traveling to these other states where they are actually welcomed rather than chased out. We need to reverse this.**

# 1,131: Apr 21, Access to public land is very important for horse owners who continue to experience land less available for riding because of urban sprawl. Also use of public land is important for the economy of the State Of Michigan because not only do residents of Michigan use public land, many out of state horse owner also use the land. What is good for horses is good for agriculture and is good for Michigan

# 1,131: Apr 21, Access to public land is very important for horse owners who continue to experience land less available for riding because of urban sprawl. Also use of public land is important for the economy of the State Of Michigan because not only do residents of Michigan use public land, many out of state horse owner also use the land. What is good for horses is good for agriculture and is good for Michigan

**# 1,134: Apr 21, Michigan : There are a huge number of trail riders in the state of Michigan, and we don't have a lot of trails to ride on, and loosing even one means less places to ride. We need MORE trails. Other states have really nice horse camps, and do well. So I don't see why Michigan could do the same. Please don't close any more horse camps.**

# 1,136: Apr 22, Michigan: If the future of Michigan is tourism, we need to preserve as much trail land as possible starting now. It's time we realize that boaters are not the only people with cash to spend in our great state.

6:27 am Apr 22, , Michigan: There is not enough area for people to enjoy all that nature in Michigan has given us, we need to be able to access all the area that is natural to nature.

# 1,138: Apr 22, Michigan Horses have been here far longer than vehicles.....And of course great therapy for others. The right to ride???? TOTALLY FOR IT

**# 1,141: Apr 22, Michigan We bought 20 acres for a premium price (\$110,000.) for a horse camp across from the Green Timbers on Fontinelis Road. Our property is absolutely worthless now as you have taken away our riding privileges in the Green Timbers. This was included in the blanket decision for the Elk Hill area. In the 6 years we have owned this land only once have we even seen other people riding horses in that area, really what is the huge problem of managing the horse trails in this area if all I have ever seen is Elk hunters. Please, please, please look at how your decision has impacted us!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

# 1,148: Apr 22, Michigan i enjoy riding in michigan and share my love of the woods with my grandchildren.

**# 1,154: Apr 24, Illinois I reside in Illinois and still own property in northern Michigan, I return often to Michigan to ride my horse and visit my family...I can not believe you are shutting down the horse trails... with no trails open I have no reason to return to the state....**

1,156: 5:09 pm PDT, Apr 25, Michigan: Please keep area's on state owned land open to horses. The horse industry in Michigan is large and we need this safe ridding option as country road are no longer safe.

# 1,160: Apr 26, Michigan We just bought a camper-horse trailer. So I am worried that Michigan is closing trails. Of course there are other states that welcome us.

# 1,164: Michigan Horseback riders and other users have the right to utilize and respectfully experience all state owned properties. These properties were set aside by our forefathers for the enrichment of all our lives and we must work together to regain our rights.

# 1,173: Michigan: I support the Right to Ride on public lands throughout Michigan. Equestrians are major contributors to Michigan's economy and also are a low impact user. There are numerous studies compiled by Natural Resource departments throughout the United States that clearly show horseback riding is low impact, a low vector for transmission of weeds, and a very low vector for wildlife disturbance. There are many organizations within the equine community in Michigan that have offered to aid in trail maintenance and design as well as support trails through volunteer labor. The argument that the P/R act does not allow horseback riding if those federal funds are used on public land is weak. The argument that if the State Game fund was used to purchase the land means that horseback riding is in violation is weak and inaccurate because the source of funds for the State Game fund is not solely hunting licenses and fees. Isn't the mission of the MDNR one of managing our natural resources for all consumers using scientific data? Why does it appear that the MDNR is not looking at the users of today but continually looking backward and trying to support the users of yesterday? The statistics developed by the MDNR clearly show that hunting and fishing users have been declining for more than 10 years. Would it not be logical to look at the consumer market you have instead of trying to subsidize the consumer market that is declining through increased universal access fees? When prices increase demand decreases. This is a simple economic premise that appears to elude the MDNR when it comes to hunting and fishing license fees. Lastly, many states receive a significant amount of tourism revenue from horseback riding participants. Michigan could participate in this revenue enhancement.

# 1,177: Michigan: Restricting access to State and Federal lands for a specific group of citizens is an infringement of their rights. Horses have less impact than ATVs and snowmobiles.

# 1,182: Michigan: In support of re-opening the Pigeon River Country along with other Michigan state lands to horseback riding.

# 1,188: Indiana: I go to my Aunt's house every summer in Hanover, Michigan and she takes me trail riding. I always have fun and the trails are great. Please keep them open.

# 1,189: Indiana: I go to my Aunt's house in Michigan several times a year and she takes me trail riding. Don't close the trails!

# 1,190: Michigan: *It is much safer for riders to be on natural trails than on dirt roads, county roads or highways.* I don't want my children to have to ride on the same roads used by high speed automobiles, nor do I want to ride there. It is critical that trails be available for my generation as well as the future. Trail riding is therapeutic for the mind and soul, we love it as much as any natural outdoor activity enjoyed by a hunter, a bike rider or hound group. If it was determined necessary to limit the season or amount of riders at one time, a lottery could be used, like a doe permit, you get to ride during these dates etc. Another thought is to leave trails half open to riding and leave the other half of our tax payers state land open for other non-equestrian uses. Why can't there be balance if this is hurting the lands?

# 1,191: Michigan: Tail riding with our horses has been our family activity for over 20 years and a wonderful way to teach our children about the outdoors and respect to our wild life. The Pigeon River was one that my kids will never forget because they was able to see wild elk in there natural habitat safely on horseback. It takes away apart of our natural heritage from our future children when you close down the places that we have grown up loving, riding, and experiencing with our parents. Please enact HB 4610 for the future children!

# 1,195: Michigan: Throughout history, one of our most basic modes of transportation has been riding. Using our state lands for their beauty and in the least impacting way, like horseback riding, should be a primary purpose/use for state land.

# 1,199: Michigan: Please leave access to the trails for use with horses. There are fewer and fewer areas available to ride in.

# 1,203: Michigan: To the State of Michigan, Please enact the Right to Ride Petition HB 4610. Trail riding is my main hobby that I enjoy with my children and friends. I help support the Michigan economy with my Equine hobby. The summer of 2008 I purchased a \$23,000 horse trailer that is pulled with my american made Dodge Ram pickup. I support the local hay farmers in my area by purchasing hay for my 4 horses. I am in my local (Midland) TSC every week buying grain for my horses, plus stall bedding and wormers on a regular basis. I also employ the services of my local farrier who is planning on opening a therapeutic riding stable in the area to help. By keeping our trails open you give me a reason to keep my horses in this difficult economy. Sincerely, Lisa Drury

# 1,207: Michigan: Camping with our horses and riding them on our beautiful Michigan trails is a way many of us charge our batteries (so to speak) to help cope with the everyday stresses of life. A kind of therapy no Doctor can supply. Road riding is dangerous! Our trails are peaceful and relaxing. Please don't take them away from us.

**April 28, 2009 HB 4610**

**Introduction:**

Thank you Honorable Representatives for allowing us to speak to you this morning regarding HB 4610.

I am Gabrielle Hume and I am a member of Michigan Trail Riders Association (MTRA) and Back Country Horsmen of Michigan – Pigeon River & Beyond. I own 3 horses, a small farm, a large truck and trailer, and a commuter car.

I am here today to present information on behalf of horseback riders throughout Michigan in support of House Bill 4610

**My background:**

I grew up in New York State and moved to Michigan 23 years ago.

I grew up in the midst of outdoor recreation – on Long Island and later in the Adirondack Mountains. I've worked for ski resorts and golf courses; at snowmobile associations and lake resorts.

Near where I lived in the Adirondack mountains and where my sister still lives and I visit, there is one of many equestrian campgrounds and trail areas. This type of facility is similar to others throughout the State of New York –from Long Island to the Canadian Border. This location – called Otter Creek – is frequented not only by New York residents, but by many out-of staters. I've seen rigs from Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado on my short visits.

The equestrian trails in New York State are REPEATEDLY written up in national and international horse magazines. It's part of "I LOVE NY" tourism theme. There is no minimum number of rigs required to use the campgrounds and most are free to use. Overflow areas are clearly marked and suggested alternative camping areas are provided at the trail head; along with the phone numbers of local veterinarians, listings of restaurants, stores, etc. to encourage folks to go into nearby towns.

I believe that Michigan has more than sufficient land to provide similar facilities and I think that these should be dispersed throughout the state to keep tourism dollars here but more importantly, to bring in outside money. Every dollar spent creates tax dollars



that can be used elsewhere in Michigan. It's hard to draw outdoor recreationists into lower peninsula if they don't have places to go.

Michigan equestrians, along with other user groups, donate hundreds of hours of their time and machinery to clear and repair trails and create campsites. Equestrians welcome the advice and engineering skills of land managers and are willing to work with them to create safe pathways and parking and camping areas. We have the will and the desire to be outdoors.

I want to see the trails and campgrounds restored in Pigeon River Country in Northern Michigan; I want to see that families can go there with their children and see the Elk and wild areas from horseback, and not have to ride on roads.

Where I live, in Lapeer County, there is land that was donated to the state for horse use that has been closed to those users. So in addition to reopening ALL of Pigeon River Country, ALL areas of the state need to be considered. I want the land in Lapeer county and the many other areas of the state that have been closed, to be REOPENED to users. Lapeer County has I-69 running through it; and it's not far from I-75 which provides easy access from outside of Michigan. This land should be open for all users - not only for hunting and fishing.

In support of these efforts for our rights to ride on public land in a safe manner, I created for the Back Country Horsemen of Michigan both a paper and an internet-online petition. We started the paper petition March 13 of this year and in just 6 weeks, we have compiled more than 5500 signatures in support of HB 4610. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, just 1 month ago, I also started an online petition. That has accumulated nearly 1200 signatures. **That's nearly 7000 people** that want this legislation to pass. 7000 out of 80,000 trail riders in 6 weeks. Pretty powerful don't you think?

I asked the question: "What areas do you know of that have been closed to horses?" I was overwhelmed by the response – I learned from impassioned equestrians. I have collected all of those comments and printed them. You have them before you. But I want to take just a moment to read a few of them.

#540: Try it you'll like it! I dont ride much, but I do participate when my family does. You will find that trail riding is a family event. Why put these kids on the street so they can find "other" hobbies?

#141: I am a horse owner and trail rider and truely enjoy the beauty, and solitude of riding the back trails of Michigan.

**I am currently on a tour in Iraq fighting for the rights of Iraqi people. This is a very stressful situation and I am looking forward to coming home on leave in the next month and riding with my friends on the trails to forget for a short period of time what I must face each day here in Iraq.**

#193: I am a therapeutic riding instructor for NARHA. Lands like Pigeon River State Forest, have always been a goal for my students to acheive. The availability of such a vast riding wilderness in the lower penninsula is very valuable to our group.

When you are working with troubled teens, the very environment that these riding/camping areas create are therapeutic in their very own. Imagine them actually earning a chance to take a horse camping and maybe being able to see elk, see the northern lights, hear coyote at night, no cell phones, no computers, and most of all no pressures!

Please don't take this great resource and teaching tool from us. I am very happy to talk with you further on what great results we have with teens and special needs individuals when you use horses and nature.

Sheryl L. Mankel

### **Another Therapeutic Riding Instructor's comments:**

#332: As an avid trail rider, horseback riding instructor, and Therapeutic Riding Instructor with NARHA, I fully support keeping public land open to riding. Riding on roads is increasingly dangerous. Riding a horse may be the only option for a person with disabilities to enjoy trails. Thank you for the opportunity to express my view.

#822: I am 69 years old and no longer hike or ride my bike 10-20 miles as I did in my 30's and 40's. For the last 20 years, I have been horseback riding. I can ride my horse all day and enjoy the fresh air and beautiful scenery here in Michigan. It is not fair that many non-motorized trails discriminate against equestrians. Many of us are older women. All non-motorized trails should accommodate equestrians.

Please make sure that this right to ride legislation is not just limited to one type of trail. Equestrians need a whole section in the Environmental Law. Thanks for righting things for equestrian trail users. We like destinations just like bikers and hikers.

#426: My husband and I are members of the MI Trail Riders. We have horses so we can ride the beautiful trails here. If they are taken away we might as well sell our horses, truck, and trailer. There will be no need to buy MI hay, MI feed, new saddles, tack, or other horse equipment. No need for hiring MI vet or MI farrier. Then as soon as we retire we will move to a more horse trail friendly state. Many of our friends said they would do the same. If this happens a lot of money that could have stayed in MI will go to another state where we will buy back horses, hay, tack, equipment, trucks, and trailers. And

hire that state's vets and farrier's, etc. That move will be bad for the MI economy. Therefore we implore you to support HB 4610

#436: There are public lands which have already been designated as "off-limits" to horses. Some of these designations are not legal and did not follow due process of the law. This will continue unless the trend is actively stopped. It is time for horse owners to take a stand, before it is too late.

#597: THIS [Trail Riding] IS A HUGE FAMILY ACTIVITY AND 4H ACTIVITY. AS A 4H LEADER AND FAMILY THAT TRAIL RIDES, WE DO NOT WANT OUR TRAILS TAKEN AWAY.

#4: No state land should be off limits to a limited and specific group of people who want to enjoy the natural beauty of the state while doing no damage to the environment. What does the DEQ and DNR have against Northern Michigan ... first the Mullett Lake Snowmobile trail and now the horse trails in the Pigeon River area. It is ridiculous.

#459: Please keep our trails open so we can share them with our grandchildren. Equine activities serve to keep our youth interested in the great outdoors. Respect for the environment and nature cannot be learned in front of a television playing with electronic games. Help me keep trails open to my grandchildren so they will be better stewards of the land and our natural renewable resources. Thanks for you hard work championing our cause!

#179: I am not a equestrian, but support them 100%. All individuals that use state land for recreation could find their favorite sport limited just like what is happening to the equestrians. All forms of recreation that use state land must work together in order to maintain access to state land and

federal lands. This is more than just a equestrian problem, it is an ACCESS problem. Pass the word!!

#923: I have been a horse owner and trail riding enthusiast for 45 years. I was raised in Michigan and educated at Michigan State Univ with a BS in Large Animal Physiology. I moved to Ohio in 1983 to complete a MS in Zoonotic Disease from OSU. I regularly travel home to Michigan to join my horse club (Jackson Western Horsemen) for numerous events, including frequent trips to Waterloo Rec Area and Goose Creek/Pigeon River. The idea of these natural state owned areas becoming off limits to horsemen is disturbing. Trail riding and horse camping are environmentally low impact and very "green" activities. I would like to see statistical data detailing the detrimental environmental impact of horse trail and camping activities on Michigan's state land. Snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, and ATV trail use must surely impact natural areas to a greater extent than horseback riding in Michigan. Horseback riding is such a peaceful, family-oriented, low fossil fuel activity with significant historical roots in Michigan. It must not become a lost art or activity.

**#660: As natural resource managers for a government agency, we are aware of the many challenges inherent in providing quality recreation experiences for diverse users. We respect site-specific decisions to restrict or prevent some uses in some places some of the time. In our career, equestrians have often been the most courteous, thoughtful, and dedicated trail riders, volunteering thousands of hours for trail maintenance and land stewardship. In particular, we laud the efforts of Backcountry Horsemen of America, who work tirelessly on behalf of many outdoor enthusiasts. By signing this petition, we wish to encourage MDNR to**

continue to seek ways to work **WITH** and not in spite of organizations that share your mission to care for the land.

**And this comment – a sad statement of where we are today.**

# 1082: Apr 17, 2009, , Michigan

I can't believe that we have come to this place in time where we have to defend our right to be able to ride a horse when man has used horses for thousands of years.

Again thank you honorable Representatives for listening today. I appreciate all your efforts in regard to passing House Bill 4610.

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